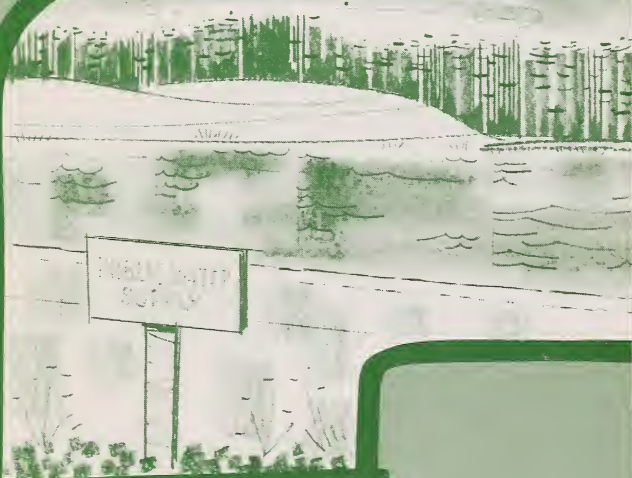


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Cap. 2

PROTECTING YOUR WATER SUPPLY at its SOURCE



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OUR WORRY OVER WATER

How much water do you use in a day?

The amount varies with different people and where they live. But each family is using more water now than even 5 years ago. And the demand for water—for homes, for industry, for agriculture, and for recreation and wildlife—continues to grow much faster than the population.

Where is all this additional water to come from?

This question is puzzling some of the best minds in the country. It concerns you, too. For we can expect, that by 1980, this Nation will need 600 billion gallons of water a day. We now use about 350 billion gallons daily.

Our troubles of water supply—for today as well as for the future—are of growing concern to everyone. With this concern has come an understanding of the



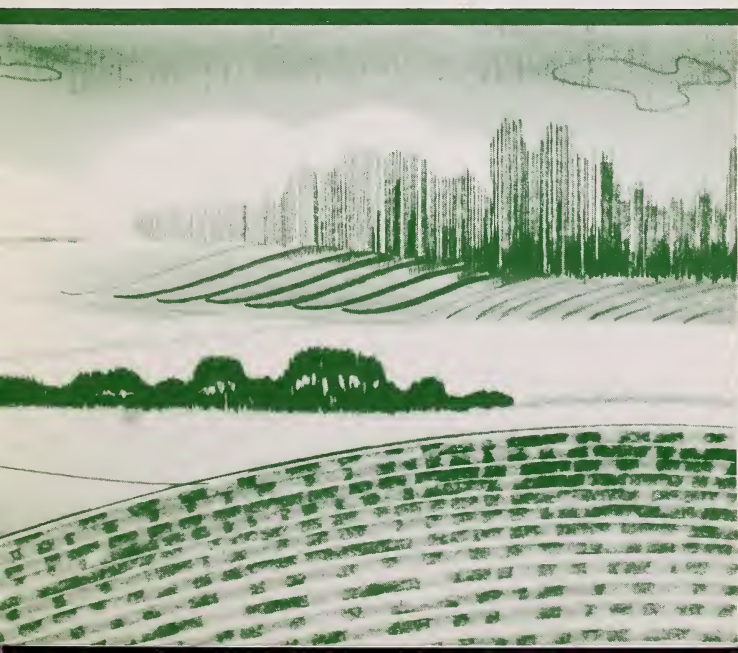
importance to all citizens of protecting and improving their water supplies at the source.

LAND IS YOUR SUPPLIER

All the water you use comes from rain and snow that fall almost entirely on agricultural land. Slopes, hills, and mountains that divide the land into watersheds also separate the water supply.

People and industry in every city and town depend on watersheds to gather, store, and supply them with water. Agriculture has to have water from rain or snow for growing crops and raising livestock.

Our water problems are watershed land problems. Size of the watershed is less important to water conservation than is the influence of land use on the movement of water into or over the ground.



TOO LITTLE OR TOO MUCH

There's a water problem nearly everywhere. It varies by community or watershed. For some, it's not enough water. For others, it's too much. Or it may be too early or too late.

A city water shortage usually results from a rapidly increasing demand, greater than the available supply. A general water shortage comes about because of drought in the watersheds.

Too much water at the wrong time may be equally serious. Not a year goes by without a disastrous flood somewhere. Flood damage to homes, industrial and business property, transportation and utility facilities, and agricultural land runs at least a billion dollars a year.



LOSS AND COST

Often a potential supply of water is lost because storage is not available to hold runoff from heavy flash rains, or the rain falls on agricultural land that does not absorb it.

Soil eroded from roadsides, residential and industrial developments, farms and ranches shows up downstream in sediment which pollutes streams and reduces reservoir storage capacity. Choked stream channels increased flooding and sometimes cause streams to cut new channels.

Lost runoff, sedimentation, and evaporation of water stored above ground reduce the usable supply. The cost of storing and filtering water for home and industrial uses is increasing by millions of dollars a year.

PROTECTION STARTS ON FARM, RANCH LAND

Since your water supplies are derived from agricultural lands, adequate conservation measures and proper land use on farms and ranches are basic first steps to watershed protection, flood prevention, and an ample supply of clean water.

By applying protective conservation measures and by shifting some land from cultivated crops to grass and trees, farmers and ranchers help curb soil erosion, help conserve water for drought periods, and help control runoff in times of heavy rainfall.

Protection of agricultural land reduces soil-caused pollution in lakes and reservoirs, and decreases flooding downstream. Protection improves the timing of the water's arrival at streams, lakes, reservoirs, or underground storage where it can be withdrawn for human and industrial use.

EVERYBODY BENEFITS

Protection and improvement of agricultural land upstream assures a more plentiful and stable supply of cleaner water for homes and industry downstream.

Communities with water problems benefit through less costs of constructing and protecting flood prevention and water storage dams and reservoirs. Less public expenditure is needed for repair and replacement of roads, bridges, stream channels, and reservoir capacity.

Wildlife food, cover, and water are increased. Natural beauty is created and protected by the curving terraces, stripcropping and sod waterways, and the trees, grass, and farm ponds that dot the landscape.

City workers and their families find more hunting, fishing, swimming, and other recreation places. Forestry income and employment potentials are increased, often made possible for the first time, through the planting of trees and the improvement of timber stands.

Folks in town benefit from the stable agricultural industry which conservation and land use efforts help to bring about. Merchants sell more. People buy more. Employment is up. Business is better. Tax revenues improve.



HOW PROGRAMS WORK

Conservation cost-sharing, income protection, and cropland adjustment programs are run locally by Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation committees of farmers elected by their neighbors to this responsibility.

They work hand-in-hand with other important conservation programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These include technical assistance, soil and water conservation loans, conservation research, and educational services. Local soil and water conservation districts help coordinate these services.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The farmers and ranchers who operate our farmlands, rangelands, and woodlands also control much of the water that falls on their land.

The use and conservation of the land itself is the key to more water, better water, and a more stable water supply in your watershed.

You can get benefits you want and your community needs by putting conservation objectives in organizations to which you belong. Get other citizens interested in conservation and in encouraging farmers and ranchers to take part in the programs that help do what you want done.

The result can be better protection for soil, woods, wildlife—and more water for America's future.

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